



European Digital Media Observatory

**Weekly insight n°7**

# DISINFORMATION NARRATIVES ABOUT THE WAR IN UKRAINE

27/04/2022 to 12/05/2022

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# 5 CIRCULATING FALSE NARRATIVES

## TREND #1

### Distorted representation of Ukrainians and Zelensky

Ukrainians are neo-Nazis (e.g., [here](#))

Discreditation of Zelensky (e.g., [here](#))

False information on Ukrainian army (e.g., [here](#))

□ 23% of analysis

## TREND #2

### Questioning the war, from its reality to its motives

Framing the war within conspiracy theories (e.g., [here](#))

Focus on bio-weapons labs (e.g., [here](#))

Focus on Bucha as staged by Ukrainians (e.g., [here](#))

□ 18% of analysis

## TREND #3

### False information on foreign support for Ukraine

Focus on alleged military intervention (e.g., [here](#))

Distorting NATO's past & present role and responsibilities (e.g., [here](#))

Focus on institutional and societal support (e.g., [here](#))

□ 18% of analysis

## TREND #4

### Unsubstantiated information about military operations

Out of context videos and pictures (e.g., [here](#))

Focus on Azovstal (e.g., [here](#))

□ 14% of analysis

## TREND #5

### Disinformation on Ukrainian refugees

Ukrainians are violent and racists (e.g., [here](#))

Questioning the need to flee Ukraine (e.g., [here](#) & [here](#))

□ 13% of analysis

→ 13% of analysis of analysis did not fall in any of the above trends

# EARLY-WARNINGS: WHAT TO EXPECT

## 1. Disinformation on Finland's and Sweden's potential NATO membership

As Finland and Sweden get nearer to deciding on a NATO membership application, their potential status change is becoming the target of multiple false narratives. Among others, false claims on Swedish ties with Nazi-culture (e.g., [here](#)) and Finnish peoples' Nazi inclinations (e.g., [here](#)) being the true motivation behind their application for NATO membership. Russia warned of “military and political repercussions” if the Swedes and Finns decide to join NATO. The Kremlin spokesperson, Dmitry Peskov, said “everything will depend on how this process takes place, how far the military infrastructure moves towards our borders.” ([The Guardian](#)). In this regard, false information is also growing, including on Finnish military contingents being moved to the border with Russia (e.g., [here](#)) preparing for an escalation of tensions.

## 2. Stronger link between Covid-19 and Ukraine war related disinformation

Since the beginning of the war, disinformation on U.S. bio-weapon labs as the actual target of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine has been widely circulating. These secret laboratories would be supposedly producing and weaponizing deadly diseases, including Covid-19 (e.g., [here](#)). The permeability of Covid-19 and war related disinformation is likely to grow and develop into new narratives. For instance, Russian Defense Ministry recently claimed that leading pharmaceutical companies in the production of Covid-19 vaccines, such as Pfizer and Moderna, are using US financed biolaboratories in Ukraine to test new medicines while bypassing international standards (e.g., [here](#)).

## 3. Inflated consequences of sanctions on the food supply chain

Following presentation of the EU’s sixth package of sanctions against Russia, disinformation targeting the economic consequences of the war is likely to grow. In particular, pro-Russian false narrative are inflating the consequences of sanctions on the wheat supply chain and blaming “the West” for worsening global famine (e.g., [here](#)).

# DATA PROVIDED BY EDMO'S FACT-CHECKING NETWORK

Occurrence of trends in the fact-checking analysis published by the EDMO network between 27.04.2022 and 12.05.2022

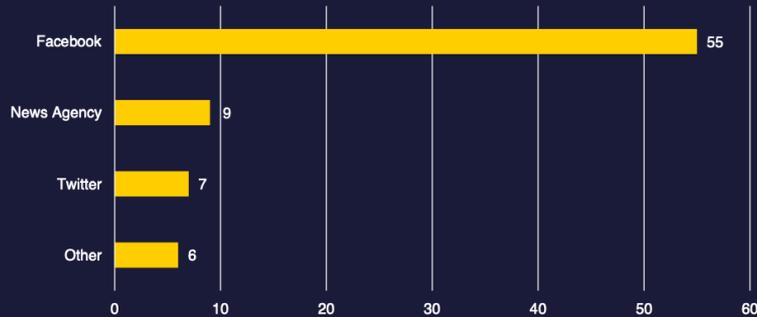


In total, 1024 analyses have been provided by EDMO's fact-checking network partners since 24 February 2022 and 77 in the period covered by this report (27.04 to 12.05).

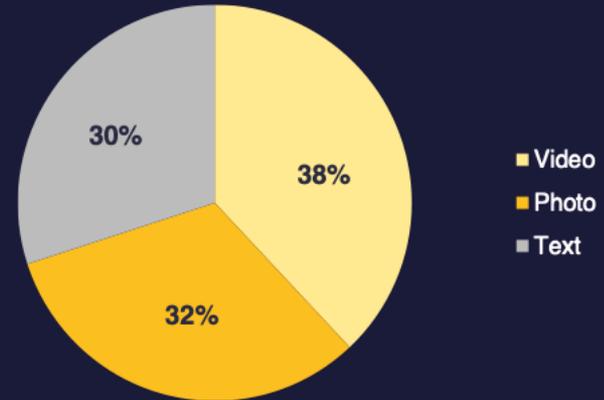
*Organisations that contributed to this report: [Mimikama](#), [AFP Factual](#), [DPA Belgium](#), [Factcheck Vlaanderen](#), [Knack](#), [AFP Proveri](#), [Provera činjenica](#), [AFP Na pravou míru](#), [TjekDet](#), [AFP Faktantarkistus](#), [AFP Factcheck](#), [Correctiv](#), [DPA Germany](#), [AFP Faktencheck Germany/Austria](#), [AFP Factcheck Greek](#), [EllinikaHoaxes](#), [AFP Tenykerdes](#), [The Journal – FactCheck](#), [FactaNews](#), [Re:Baltica](#), [Delfi](#), [DPA Luxembourg](#), [AFP Faktencheck Netherlands](#), [DPA Netherlands](#), [Faktisk.no](#), [AFP Sprawdzam](#), [Demagog](#), [Polígrafo](#), [AFP Verificat](#), [AFP Fakty](#), [Ostro](#), [AFP Comprovem](#), [AFP Factual](#), [EFE Verifica](#), [MALDITA.ES](#), [Newtral](#), [Verificat](#), [Eesti Päevaleht](#).*

# DATA PROVIDED BY EDMO'S FACT-CHECKING NETWORK

Number of disinformation items per platforms  
(Facebook, Twitter, News Agency, Other)



Outlets used to convey disinformation  
(video, image, text)



➔ This data has been extracted from the fact-checking analysis published by EDMO's fact-checking network

## METHODOLOGY

The information contained in this brief is based on [EDMO's repository](#) of fact-checking analysis on the war in Ukraine. The repository's items are provided by the fact-checking organisations that are part of the EDMO fact-checking network.

Reference period: 27 April - 12 May 2022. Number of analysis studied: 77.

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